

## Health sector update: long COVID Programme

Update #2 1 July 2022

Kia ora koutou,

Welcome to the second sector update on the long COVID programme.

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### The Ministry of Health's long COVID programme

The Ministry of Health long COVID programme continues to operate at pace to develop a Clinical Rehabilitation Guideline for people with Long COVID in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The long COVID programme has ongoing collaboration with the sector and relevant professional bodies and agencies both in NZ and overseas to support the development of a clinical rehabilitation guideline for people with long COVID in Aotearoa New Zealand. Regular engagement and presentations have occurred to socialise the programme and ensure essential linkages are made to enhance the overall development of the guideline.

The Ministry of Health website and the [long COVID webpage](#) will be continually updated as the evidence emerges.

### Clinical case definitions long COVID

Long COVID-19 is also referred to in literature as ongoing symptoms of COVID-19, post COVID-19 syndrome, post-COVID-19 condition, post-acute sequelae of COVID-19. The term 'long COVID' is commonly used to describe signs and symptoms that continue or develop after acute COVID-19. Symptoms may last for weeks or months after the acute illness.

The clinical case is defined by the below timeframes irrespective of a confirmed diagnosis by testing.

- **Acute Covid-19** – Signs and symptoms of COVID-19 for up to 4 weeks
- **Ongoing symptomatic COVID-19** - Signs and symptoms of COVID-19 post the acute /infectious period of the illness from 4 weeks up to 12 weeks
- **Post-COVID-19 syndrome** (long COVID)- Signs and symptoms that develop during or after an infection consistent with COVID-19, that continue for more than 12 weeks and are not explained by an alternative diagnosis.

## Recording and coding long COVID

This information is for GPs, hospital clinicians and their software industry partners. It should be used to record details of COVID-19 in the affected patient's health record.

Coding has been updated to reflect the clinical case definitions for **Ongoing symptomatic COVID-19** and **Post-COVID-19 syndrome**.

You should use the SNOMED CT codes in the table below for case classification, following the [case definition and testing guidance for COVID-19](#). These SNOMED concepts and terms are included in the [SNOMED CT New Zealand Edition](#). If your software does not yet support SNOMED, you will have to use the equivalent Z codes, PMS codes or ICD-10-AM codes.

Concept	SNOMED CT code	PMS code	Medtech code	Profile code	ICD-10-AM
Confirmed COVID-19	840539006		@MT0.02	COVID19-1	U07.1
Probable COVID-19	50881000210106		@MT0.04		U07.2
Under investigation COVID-19	840544004		@MT0.03	COVID19-2	Z03.8
Not a case	688232241000119100				
Ongoing symptomatic COVID-19	1119303003	@2201.00			
Post-COVID-19 syndrome	1119304009	@2202.00			

Read more here: [Recording COVID-19 | Ministry of Health NZ](#)

## Long COVID Expert Advisory Group

The Ministry established the Expert Advisory Group for long COVID to assess the evidence on long COVID and apply it to the Aotearoa New Zealand context, to help inform recommendations for clinical practice and guidelines. This group met on 1 June 2022, and it was exciting to see such diversity of membership and positive engagement. The follow up meeting will be held on 13 July 2022. The group recommended that additional membership was sought for representation from people living with disabilities, Pacific Peoples and Youth. We are actively recruiting to these roles ahead of the next meeting 13 July.

Long COVID Expert Advisory Group members are:

- *Dr Martin Chadwick* (Chair) - Chief Allied Health Professions Officer within the Ministry of Health, providing transdisciplinary clinical leadership and advice. The role works at a systems level as well as providing support to clinicians, programmes and projects across the Ministry. Martin was the 2019-20 New Zealand Harkness Fellow in Health Care Policy and Practice. He has completed his doctoral degree in 2019 examining health workforce change.
- *Dr Ian Town* - Chief Science Advisor at the Ministry of Health, subject matter expertise in Medicine and Health, Higher Education Management, Health Research and Evidence Based Medicine, Innovation, Entrepreneurism, Strategic Planning, Academic Health Alliances and Master Planning
- *Rawiri Keenan* - Rawiri (Te Ati Awa/Taranaki) is a leader and educator of Māori General Practitioners. As Pou Whirinaki at the Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners, Rawiri leads, supports and advocates for Māori GPs.
- *Luke Maclean-McMahon* - Lived experience of Long COVID, diagnosed by specialist, born and raised in Porirua, is Cook Island Maori and also identifies as Irish and Scottish
- *Juanita Woodhouse* - Juanita is a New Zealand Maori who has lived experience of Long COVID.
- *Dr Arran Culver* - Arran is the Chief Clinical Advisor in the Mental Health and Addiction Directorate, Ministry of Health. Prior to this role, he was a child and adolescent psychiatrist.

- *Jen Mepham* - Jen is a Physiotherapist working at Mercy Hospital, Dunedin. Her area of interest is cardio-respiratory physiotherapy
- *Jo Hikaka* -Research fellow at University of Auckland, Jo (Ngāruahine) has worked as a clinical pharmacist, specialising in Older Adult Health. Her current research focuses on access to health services and treatment for Māori
- *Sharon Russell* - The Associate Chief of Allied Health Scientific and Technical professions officer at Waitematā DHB, professional background as a physiotherapist with a clinical focus when discussing new models of care, and best practice for innovation and change
- *Robyn Whittaker* - Clinical Director of Innovation at the Institute for Innovation and Improvement, Waitemata District Health Board. International expert in research and development in the use of mobile health technology for population health interventions. Appointed member of the WHO Digital Health Technical Advisory Group. Member of the National Telehealth Forum Leadership Group
- *Cathy O'Malley* - General manager strategy, primary and community at Nelson Marlborough DHB. Previously held roles in the Ministry of Health as the chief advisor for strategy and policy, deputy director general and, acting director of service commissioning
- *Dr Donna Cormack* - has been involved in work on the collection and classification of ethnicity data in Aotearoa/New Zealand, particularly as it relates to measuring and monitoring inequities
- *Emily Sorby* - Māori Director Starship Community at Auckland DHB. Most recent role involved leading the Maori Covid-19 welfare response for the Auckland Metro Region and is currently seconded to the Northern Region Health Coordination Centre to design and lead the regional Welfare response.
- *Disabilities representative* – In the process of being confirmed
- *Youth representative* – In the process of being confirmed

## Journeying Together Through the Fog – Symposium Long COVID

On the 25 May 2022, a number of New Zealand universities collaborated to bring together national and international speakers to share their learnings about how best to support people who experience ongoing symptoms following a COVID-19 infection, Post COVID-19 Syndrome.

You can find a recording of the seminar at [Long COVID: Journeying together through the fog 2022 website \(otago.ac.nz\)](https://www.otago.ac.nz/long-covid).

## Guidance on the acute phase of rehabilitation of people with or recovering from COVID-19 in Aotearoa New Zealand.

As a result of emerging research the 2020 document *Guidance for rehabilitation of people with or recovering from COVID-19 in Aotearoa New Zealand* has been revised by the Ministry and Health and Allied Health Aotearoa New Zealand (AHANZ)

You can find the document published on 30 June 2022 at: [Guidance for the Acute Phase of Rehabilitation of People with or Recovering from COVID 19 in Aotearoa New Zealand](https://www.health.govt.nz/publication/guidance-for-the-acute-phase-of-rehabilitation-of-people-with-or-recovering-from-covid-19-in-aotearoa-new-zealand)